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Road tests

Andrew Wainio

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Road Tests
a
Graduate Thesis
Master of Fine Arts
from
The School of Photographic Arts and Sciences
at the
Rochester Institute of Technology
by
Andrew Wainio

May 8th 2001

The following members of my Thesis Board Committee have agreed to accept this written portion of my thesis as the completion of a master of Fine Arts Degree in Fine Art Photography :

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Road Tests

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have made this possible:

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Associate Professor Jeff Weiss
Professor Elaine Oneil
Professor Dan Larkin

and the following individuals:

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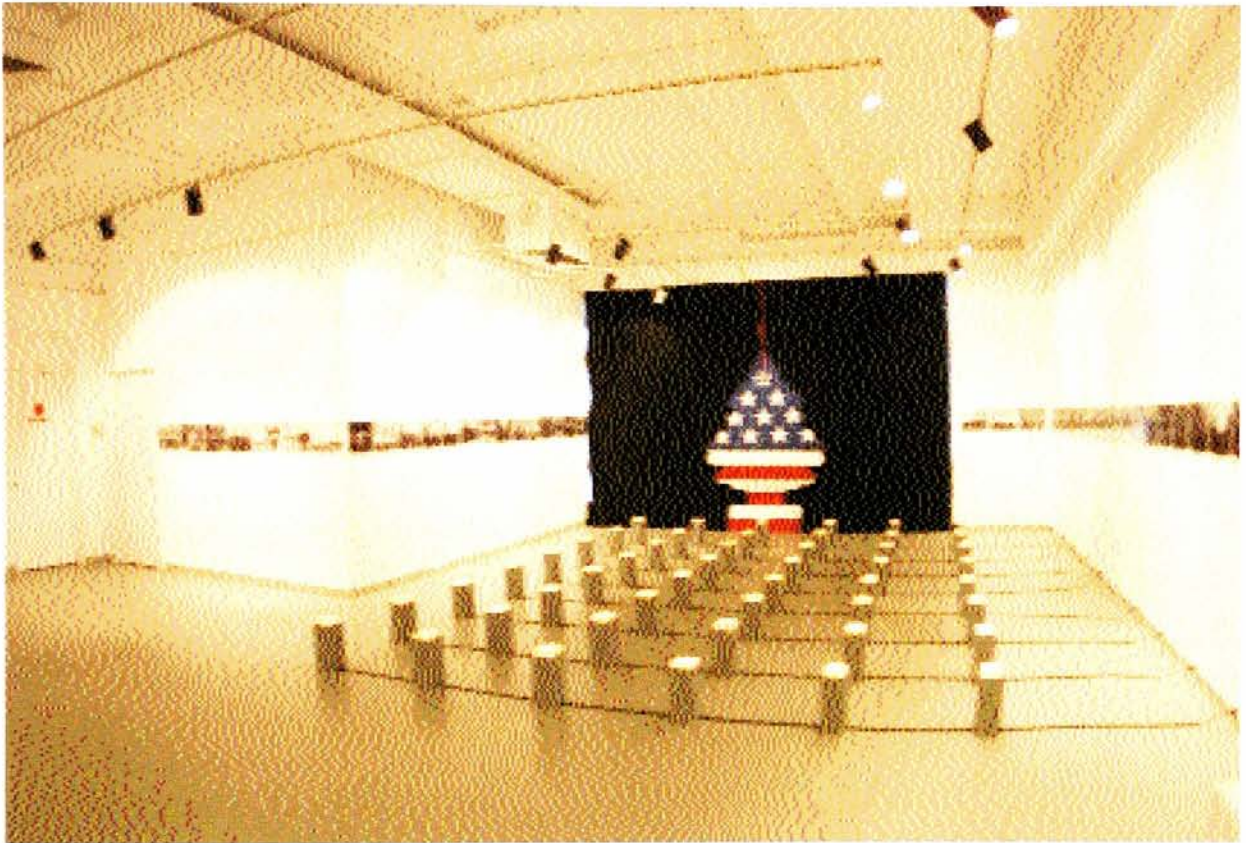
and most of all:

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Irene lambros

not to be forgotten:

Ford Motor Company
General Motors
Volkswagon

Road Tests



by Andrew Wainio

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Introduction

My first vividly cognizant memory is from when I was three years old. I was laying down on the back seat of my parent's new 1977 Ford Econoline Clubwagon Van. It was blue. My father, a teacher, had purchased it for the sole purpose of taking my mother, sister, and I on lengthy road trips during the long summer public school vacations. This first memory is of an incident which occurred right outside of Rochester, New York, the city where I would end up later to work on my M.F.A. We were driving on I-90 East, when a tractor trailer rig ran two small cars into the median right behind our van completely destroying both cars. We did not know if or how many people died. My father called the Rochester police and identified himself as a witness to the accident, but the police never called him back.

From 1977 to 1989, every summer vacation was spent in that van. My parents were public school teachers, so the summers were the time to escape and hit the open roads for some quality family time. My father also has a dislike for planes. He has never told me why, but he has only been on a plane once. Consequently, all of our summer

journeys were confined to the car. As a result of the carefully planned excursions, I had seen at least twenty of the United States by the age of ten. Now at the age of twenty-four, I have been in all of the 48 contiguous United States.

The continuous motion of driving on the road for hours has always been a relaxing form of meditation for me. Even as a child, I would spend the hours on the road staring out at the horizon line that always seemed to be an unreachable goal. The family road trips ended around the time I received my driver's license, so I began taking my own excursions on the road. I was raised in a town with 25,000 inhabitants, despite that fact it was deemed the cultural mecca within a radius of 180 miles. I began taking short overnight trips to explore larger metropolitan areas of the great cities of the Midwest. As I matured, short Midwest drives turned into 3 week long journeys into the mountains of western North America and the southeastern states. My last journey culminated into the quintessential American road trip: a six week, 16,000 mile circle around the country.

The American Road

I always know where I am by the way the road looks... - River Phoenix as Mike Waters, My Own Private Idaho

Mimicing the endless variation in the landscape the roads which cut through this vast country differ greatly. Pavement is created for a specific region based upon factors such as the climate of the locale and the mineral make-up of the layers which form the land itself. It is in the fact that road is embedded with such distinction and personality is the foundation for the Romantic narrative. Whether it is David Lynch's *Wild at Heart*, the story of two young lovers on the run, Jack Kerouac's *ON THE ROAD*, the novel the embodied the beat generation and chronicles the story of a young traveler's adventures, or Peter Fonda's *Easy Rider*, where two travelers encounter countless new people and their stories, the highway has proven to be a consistent setting for the soul-searching adventure story. It is an escape from reality which in the persona of the traveler is at its most genuine.

The road narrative with which we are all familiar is also inherently American. America,

because of its size and the way it was developed, has a distinct highway aesthetic embedded within its landscape. The American landscape does not have an entirely Romantic and harmonious relationship with its roads, though.

The writings of an American traveling in the United States around two hundred years ago clearly shows the early tension between the landscape and the roads:

The country through which we passed was extremely dismal, being covered with forests upon the axe had made little impression, for excepting a few open spots here and there, such trees alone were cut down as necessary for the formation of a road, or rather the line of a road, for this was still in a very rude state, the driver being obliged to wind as well as he could between the remaining stumps. The soft soil being rendered deep by the rain that had fallen, our progress was very slow, not exceeding thirteen miles in four hours.¹

This was a time when the roads of America totaled less than 3000 miles altogether.² Today the number of miles of highway is the considered by some the greatest public works program in history ³. The Interstates make up around 20 percent of all American roads. The federal highway commission, during the Eisenhower administration,

issued these statistics on the construction of the Interstates illustrating that the interstates are a gigantic endeavor that continues to expand:

It would move enough earth to cover the state of Connecticut knee deep; it would claim enough land in rights of way to equal the acreage of Delaware; it would pave a surface equivalent to that of West Virginia. The concrete it consumed would build six sidewalks to the moon; the lumber it needed equaled four-hundred-square-miles of forest; and the drainpipe was enough for the water and sewer systems of six Chicagos.⁴

The Road and the Land

The dispositions of the road that I felt the need to explore include the creation of the highway, the history of the American road, how the road and nature coexist, and how the road effects and is effected by people. My thesis work explores the coexistence of these connotations and the many moods of the road that I have experienced in my travels. Lifestyles were created as a byproduct of the interstate. Those lives that harbored along the frayed edges of the highways supported themselves with the means from their roadside attractions. In the 1950's, along the highways out west there were giant building that were constructed to look like the products that were sold on the premises, such as a giant taco building. There is also the death and destruction the highways have brought to man and nature alike. The American road is associated with destruction and negativity, as well as with romance. Anytime that you turn on the television some channel will be broadcasting views of automobiles and negativity. Television networks like Speedvision center on high-speed machines, with programs dedicated to horrible crashes. All net-

work news programs now have their 'eye in the sky' cameras that instantaneously broadcast police car chases in metropolitan backdrops. And, if the live action is missed, it will be rebroadcast at 6 PM or on some new sensationally fantastic program possibly called 'World's Scariest Police Home Videos When Cars Explode With People Inside Part 2'.

Even when there isn't a chase on television news today, there is a good chance there will be a story about the latest fad which plagues today's drivers, the current being road rage. Angered by the careless maneuvers seen as wrong and disrespectful, self-righteous upset drivers stop their cars to bloody another driver to educate them on how the roads are supposed to be properly driven. The road also brings in one of the national leading causes of death.

When I arrived in Rochester, NY, my photographic work dealt with the picturesque landscape and image manipulation. At this point in my education, I believed the landscape to be ultimately defined in a photograph by one of the f64 pictorialists, such as Weston or Adams. I did not understand that a landscape is technically land

that has been altered or that is '-scaped'
by man.

We should not see the landscape only as a pageant, with man cast in the role of mere spectator or extra. We must not forget that man is a protagonist in the landscape: it is his territory, the product of his work and his journeying. He stamps himself upon it, and each enterprise of his history, agricultural, economic or ideological, carves its trace. This appropriation, sometimes collective, sometimes individual, produces dislocation or utopia, anxiety or harmony.

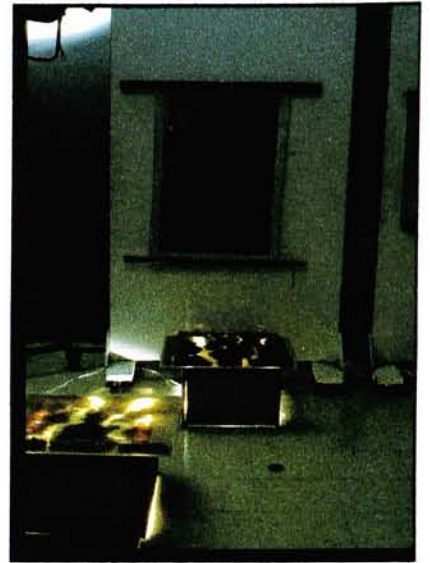
— Anonymous quote from Magnum Landscapes

If the land is altered by any means, whether man has moved through the area and some minor alteration by a footstep changed the position of a stone or a massive six-lane highway was laid through a thicket of pine trees dividing a mass of forestry, that is when it becomes a landscape. As my understanding of landscape began to be revised, my new ideas found an expression, which had changed my perceptions of how my photographic work was created.

Preparatory work 1st quarter

An investigation into the natural processes that change the land formed the core theme of my first Rochester work. Cognizant of the fact that the processes of deterioration are numerous including erosion, corrosion, and natural disasters, I limited my investigation to the process of erosion. I initially began by photographing landscapes as a form of personal therapy and meditation. Making these images was a form of mental escape from multiple psychological traumas that inflicted me at the time. It was an ideological way of taking my mind off of the images stuck in my head after witnessing a close friend's suicide on Thanksgiving and the death of an immediate family member on the following Christmas. Eventually I began to use my camera to investigate and illustrate an awareness of how landscapes are created.

For this body of work I made two sets of images each containing six images of different landscapes that visually demonstrated the process of erosion. These were 40" x 22" black and white photographs that were hand processed with a minimal amount of photographic fixer. The images,



1st quarter work



Detail of 1st quarter work



Detail of 1st quarter work

not being properly stabilized, slowly lost all of their definition over time.

The first set was comprised of photographs of landscapes that had gone through the process of erosion. Webster's definition of erosion is: to diminish or destroy by degrees; to eat away into by slow destruction of substance; to wear away by the action of water, wind, and/or glacial ice; to cause to deteriorate or disappear as if by eating or wearing away.⁶

The second set of images were made from the same negatives, but were printed onto handmade paper constructed of sand, dirt, and wood pulp. The printing process used on the paper was the antiquated process of Van Dyke Brown. This process made the blacks of the images a natural brown color. These 20" x 22" prints were displayed immersed in shallow, clear plastic tanks of water measuring 2'x 2' x 2". These tanks sat on top of light boxes of equal size. A transparency of the same image was placed between the light source and the tank. The images on the handmade paper slowly dissolved over time and broke apart in the water heated to a lukewarm temperature by the light boxes. The image on the



Detail of 1st quarter work

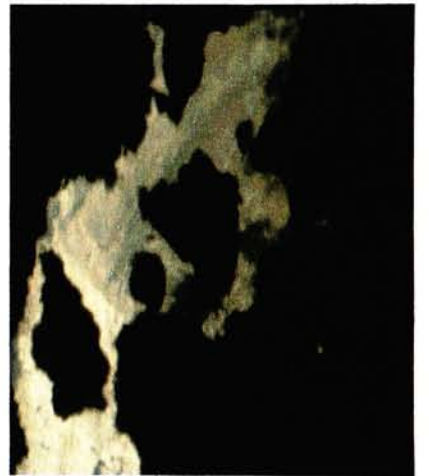


Detail of 1st quarter work

transparency then appeared through the openings created by the erosion of the handmade paper. A pulpy smell that was caused by the water heating the paper emitted from the work. This olfactory aspect was serendipitous, yet welcomed. Not only did the work deconstruct on its own, but produced an earthy scent.



Detail of 1st quarter work



Detail of 1st quarter work

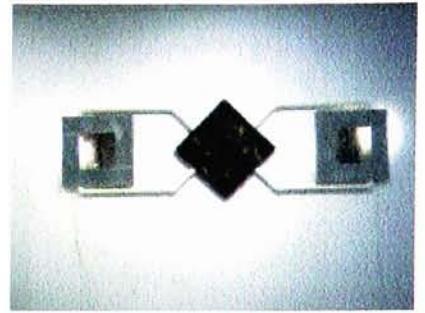


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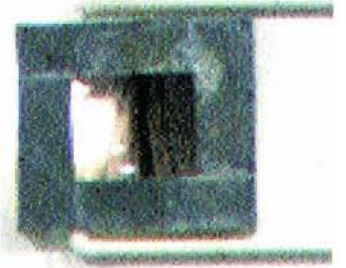
2nd Quarter Work

Erosion led to the exploration of another naturally destructive process, corrosion. There is an important distinction between erosion and corrosion. Erosion is the slow deterioration of an object through weathering, while with corrosion the object changes through a chemical reaction. The object subjected to erosion loses small pieces of itself through natural forces, always taking material from the object. Although corrosion also involves a slow change, the object that is subjected to corrosion does not necessarily lose its materiality, rather it transforms into a different substance or compound. Photography in itself as a process of corrosion. A photograph is changed through a chemical action that removes silver particles from the emulsion. The photographic emulsion retains its materiality through this process, yet changes its visual presence.

In the end, I chose not to take photographs for this body of work, but let the process of corrosion speak as a metaphor for the landscape. I began this project by creating four framing devices 2' in height x 2' in width and 2" deep.



2nd quarter work



Detail of 2nd quarter work

The square face is simple and in equilibrium, unlike the land.

All four of the square frames were connected by a piping system. Three of the squares had an internal six-inch wide frame of rusted sheet steel. On the inside surface of these three squares was a coating of light sensitive emulsion along with an internal light. A piping system pumped a continuous stream of Dektol, a photographic paper developer, onto the light sensitized area.

The three squares were mounted onto three walls all of which faced a center area, containing the fourth square. The fourth square sat on top of a bucket that held several gallons of the photo print developer Dektol and several water pumps. A road map of Rochester covered in light sensitive emulsion was on the bottom of this central square with a steady stream of Dektol dripping onto its surface. The piping system consisted of over thirty feet of 2" diameter white PVC pipe and inside the pipe was 1/2" plastic tubing of the same length. The tubing was the vessel that delivered the Dektol. This system connected all of the squares to the bucket and

aquarium pumps provided the 'ebb and flow' of Dektol to all four squares.

The three squares mounted to the walls were continually changing photographs. Wherever the Dektol happened to flow onto the light sensitive emulsion, the emulsion would darken. It was the stream of Dektol that would determine where the black tones would appear on the emulsion. This process resulted in unique photographs that defied the photographic notion that a negative can be mechanically reproduced in limitless quantities with seemingly identical results. I referred to them as "landscape" photographs, as they were ever changing in their visual characteristics, just as the landscape is constantly changed by the weather or from human influence.

The fourth square that made up the central point of the installation was a photographic sculpture which also continually changed. The light sensitive map of Rochester was molded into a three dimensional terra-form that covered the interior space of the square.

The audience reaction was mixed with excitement and fear. Some viewers enjoyed the mad scientist feel of the creations. Others felt endan-

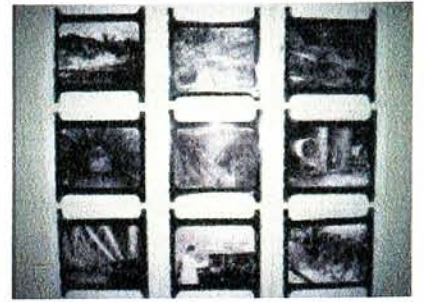
gered by the chemicals that were being carelessly spilled around them. Overall, the reaction to the work was positive.

3rd Quarter Work:

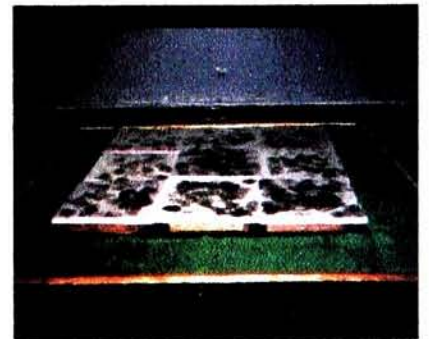
Erosion and corrosion are two different scientific methods that change the landscape in natural ways. For my third body of work, I wanted to explore other ways in which change the landscape is changed. I analyzed the landscape closest to me, the city of Rochester, by applying my prior investigations with erosion and corrosion. More than any other landscape, the cityscape continually changes through human interaction, constantly changing to fit the needs of the growing populace.

The urban landscape is made up of recycled bits of earth, a type of land known as concrete. Concrete is one of the most important structural components of a city. For this reason I decided to utilize cement to produce a 'landscape photograph' presented in an installation that developed the notion of a 'concrete photograph'.

A majority of metropolitan areas are centralized around a plaza or square. This is for the reason that most cities adopted the grid system when they first began planning the city streets. The majority of foot traffic takes place on the sidewalks of the city. Through the re-



Study for 3rd quarter work



3rd quarter work



3rd quarter work

creation of this type of area on my own terms and in an interior space, I forced the audience to participate in my experiment.

My first concern was how was I to make this installation interactive and encourage the viewer to be more capricious. The human is what changes the cityscape, therefore the viewer of this work would have to be the element of change. Once again, I decided to carry over the shape of the square as the format of creating the work, which is the shape inherent in the design of many sidewalks.

I was limited in size, due to exhibition space and studio work space, so I designed a square consisting of nine smaller squares. I began making the smaller squares with a 2' x 2' mold made out of Plexiglas, with the composite square being 6' x 6'. Each mold was filled with a fifty-pound bag of concrete mixed with water. The result was a shiny, smooth slab of concrete 2" deep. The concrete slab was then saturated with light sensitive emulsion and laid on top of 2" wooden plinths. The nine concrete slabs on their pedestals were pushed edge to edge to make the large square. All of the slabs increased in



3rd quarter work



3rd quarter work



Detail of 3rd quarter work in white light

height in minimal increments towards the center, making the center slab the tallest by approximately 1/4 of an inch. This decision was an aesthetic choice, which mimicked the elevation of the center of a town square where a fountain or statue often serves as the pinnacle of the plaza.



Detail of 3rd quarter work

A 36" wide strip of velour astro-turf outlined by a one-inch wide wooden frame was around the nine slabs of concrete. The artificial turf referenced the strip of grass that separates the sidewalk and the street. The astro-turf also suggested a notion of the city of the not-so-distant future. This imitation grass was saturated with Dektol developer. The room was illuminated by a slide projector that was rigged on the ceiling above the center of the concrete installation. A slide of a satellite photograph of Rochester was projected down onto the concrete slabs. The image of Rochester made reference to the city in which all the viewers currently lived.



Detail of 3rd quarter work

The viewer was encouraged to walk through the wet grass onto the concrete. The Dektol would coat the sole of the shoe and would then transfer to the light sensitive concrete slabs.



Detail of 3rd quarter work

This caused the viewer to create a photographic memory of their foot by leaving a black print of the sole of their shoe. As the developer oxidized, blackened areas obliterated projection of Rochester on the concrete and created an index of the viewer and how they had affected the piece. This transformation continued throughout the entire time of the exhibition. At the end of the day, the majority of the image was stamped out by black footprints.



Detail of 3rd quarter work



Detail of 3rd quarter work

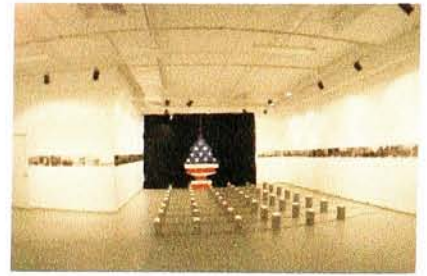


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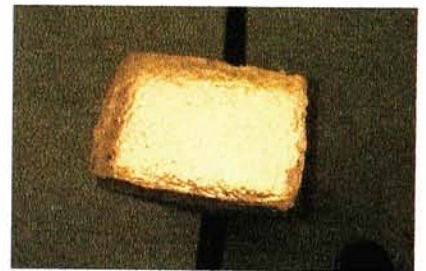
Thesis work – Segment 1

These previous three bodies of work were photographic studies of the landscape that called into question the nature of the photograph. They were landscapes themselves in their physical sculptural form. They formed the research that got me to the starting point of my thesis, "Road Tests". The final product for the show came to be three different segments of work; a sculptural installation of road castings, photographic transparencies of highway pictures, and a sculptural painting of a tree air freshener. While I will divide and describe all three segments, it must be understood that they were all created as integral parts of the exhibition exploring the structure of and meditations induced by the road.

While driving cross country, a sign was brought to my attention by my fellow traveler. He pointed out a roadside marker giving the location and the number of a test that was being performed by the Department of Transportation. A road test is a small patch of experimental asphalt. The asphalt is exposed to the elements to see if the mixture of materials comprising the specific blend will withstand the forces of nature



Exhibition at S.P.A.S. Gallery



Plexiglass asphalt cast

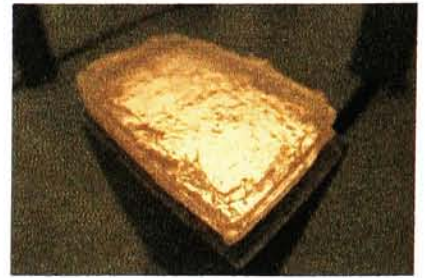


Plexiglass asphalt cast

in the area. They were also utilized to observe their patterns of deterioration. The title "Road Tests" came from these patches of experimental asphalt.

In all of my previous work I was trying to understand and define the concept of landscape photography. I was also attempting to take photography as far away from conventional definitions as possible. These thoughts remained with me as I produced my thesis exhibition. While I was being critiqued on my concrete slab installation, a viewer asked what I was to do next. I replied with "I am going to make transparent asphalt."

Why I said this I do not know, but it remained with me in mind as a dare that I had to complete. I decided that a transparent patch of asphalt was an analogy for a photograph of the road in that a photograph is nothing more than a casting of light.⁷ The light hits the paper and the molecules of silver it strikes becomes darkened and a part of the terrain of the photograph, and the molecules that are not exposed to the light are essentially lost. Thus, I began working on castings of transparent asphalt that would be illuminated from below by small individual light



Plexiglass asphalt cast



Plexiglass asphalt cast



Working on pedestals

sources. These castings of light or 'photographs' were my road.

Pavement design is comprised of many different facets. While researching highway construction manuals, I discovered that a majority of roads are built using two to five layers of paving materials. The necessity for this layering is described by Harry Atkins, a highway engineer:

The function of the pavement structure is to distribute imposed wheel loads over a large area of natural soil. If vehicles were to travel on the natural soil itself, shear failures would occur in the wheel path in most soils, and ruts would form. The shear strength of the soil is usually not high enough to support the load. In addition to its load distribution function, the surface course of a highway or airport pavement structure must provide a level, safe travelling surface.:

In order to accomplish the transfer weight required for a road to hold up are five major structural components are required. These are the components of pavement, be it a highway or a personal drive: the surface, the base, the subbase, the compacted subgrade, and the natural subgrade. It was these five elements of pavement construction upon which I based the layering in my castings.



Plexiglass asphalt cast



Plexiglass asphalt cast



Plexiglass asphalt cast

The first step involved finding multiple types of asphalt. The roads vary in texture due to the age of the asphalt, the road's location and how the road was constructed. In order to make my samples, I drove around in my car, stopping in various areas to make 4" x 6" negative plaster casts of an interesting textured sections the road. I had an entire workspace set up in the trunk of my car and could create a cast in the matter of 15 minutes.



Plexiglass asphalt cast

The next step was to cast a positive from the negative plaster cast. I utilized a Plexiglas liquid resin compound by the name Castolite AP for the positive castings. The individual plaster casts were laid inside of the wooden frame. The sides of the wooden frame were coated in a thick layer of vaseline to prevent the resin from attaching to the porous wood. The resin was then poured into the wooden moulds. This was done two to five times to create layers of resin.



Plexiglass asphalt cast

I created forty-eight castings re-presenting the number of states I have traveled in and the number of states that are physically connected by interstate highways. The castings were displayed



Pouring resin molds

in the center on the floor of the gallery space. They were arranged in a grid of 6 columns and 8 rows. The casts were placed on 4" x 6" x 12" pedestals. The pedestals were painted gray to match the floor of the gallery. Each pedestal had a 30 watt tungsten bulb inside which illuminated the casting. The lights were wired in straight lines in the rows. The wiring for the lights was laid down with black gaffer's tape in each row.



Pouring resin molds



Plexiglass asphalt cast

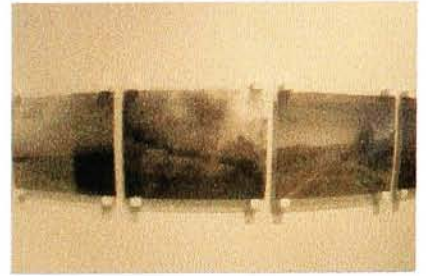


Plexiglass asphalt cast

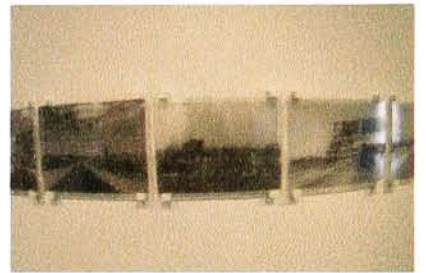
Thesis work – Segment 2

When eighteenth-century French aristocrats strolled the countryside, they viewed the landscape through an odd device called a 'Claude glass' – a framed glass used to capture picturesque views like those in Claude Lorrain's paintings. For the modern highway traveler, the Claude glass is the tinted windshield.⁹ – writer, Phil Patton

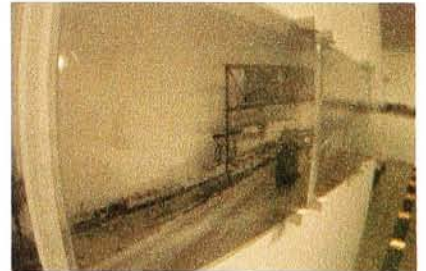
The windsheild is the glass most often viewed through while travelling in a automobile. I photographed for this body of work with the intent of showing the road straight on through the windshield while the car was in motion. The photographs were taken when conditions were both good and bad, whenever the moment felt right. Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know in certain respects they are exactly like the objects they represent.¹⁰ This idea was in my head while I photographed and cataloged over a thousand images of the American highway. The editing process consisted of taking images contained good compositional qualities and reasonable contrast. After editing, the number of images narrowed to the same as the casts, forty-eight.



11"x14" transparencies
mounted in gallery

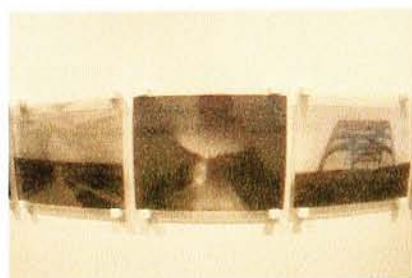


11"x14" transparencies
mounted in gallery

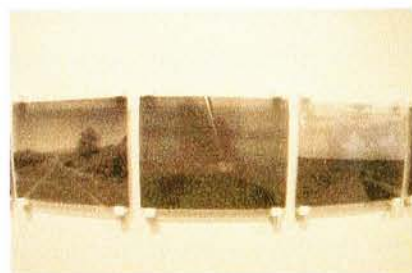


11"x14" transparencies
mounted in gallery

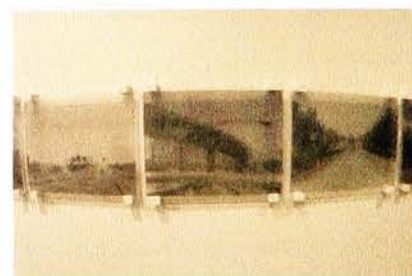
The forty-eight chosen images were both color and black and white images. The images were scanned into the computer and scaled to 11" x 14". All images were then converted into black and white images and printed on clear plastic base on a laser copier straight from a digital file. These transparencies were displayed at eye level in a straight line around the gallery space. The frames were 1/2" off of the wall between 2 sheets of 1/8" Plexiglas. The lighting in the gallery was arranged in such a way that the images on the transparencies cast shadows onto the white walls behind them. The shadows gave the viewer multiple focal points, creating an almost three dimensional feel. The visual distortion was also an analogy for the way the road looks out of the windshield to a traveler after hours of travel. The multiple focal points caused by the shadows can relax the eyes when trying to focus on the images. This can be a meditative source like the way highway driving is for many motorists. The constant vibrations of driving and the straight ahead fixed stare of the driver can cause the driver's eyes to relax, shifting foreground and background and also can



11"x14" transparencies mounted in gallery



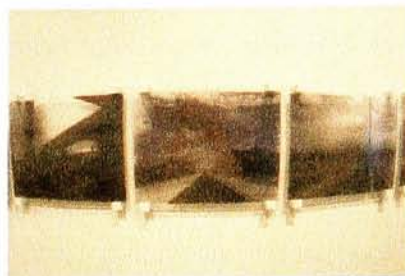
11"x14" transparencies mounted in gallery



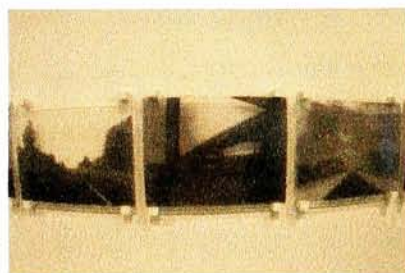
11"x14" transparencies mounted in gallery

cause each eye's separate retinal image to cross planes with the other eye. This is what happens to me on long journeys. This forced uncontrollable distortion of vision is what I was attempting to recreate in the exhibit. The images hung in a straight line mimicking the horizon line, uniting the images into a single entity, rather than making them intentional separate entities. As Nancy Foote notes in her article *The Anti-Photographers*:

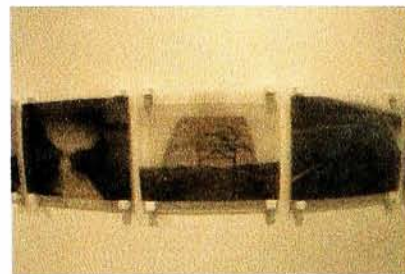
An important, if obvious, difference between traditional photography and art comprised of or documented by photos is the use of several pictures rather than one image. This immediately alters the sort of content possible within the overall work, offering the chance for a conceptual complexity rarely found in a single picture.¹¹



11"x14" transparencies
mounted in gallery



11"x14" transparencies
mounted in gallery



11"x14" transparencies
mounted in gallery

Thesis work — segment 3

Dangling over the glowing castings and dividing the horizon line of windshield images was my third icon of the open American road: a 7 foot tall Magic Tree® car deodorizer. I think that almost everyone has seen a version of the little cutout cardboard tree that hangs from the rearview mirror to lighten the smell of a car.

One of the most popular items for the interior of a car is the Magic Tree® car freshner. The Magic Tree® is a small cardboard cutout of a tree that contains a heavy chemical scent of the consumer's choice (vanilla, pine, new car, peach, piña colada, etc.). I happened upon an amusingly patriotic version of the tree named 'Vanilla Pride', which can have many connotations. The name came from its scent, 'Vanillaroma' air freshener, but had the Stars and Stripes printed on it. I felt that this icon embodied the American road, which is why I chose it.

The 'Vanilla Pride' air freshener is inherently American in multiple views. The sense of 'pride', the unmistakable stars and stripes, and the iconography of the shape and the distinguishable odor of it could be identified by a



Painting the Magic Tree air freshner



Exhibition at S.P.A.S. Gallery

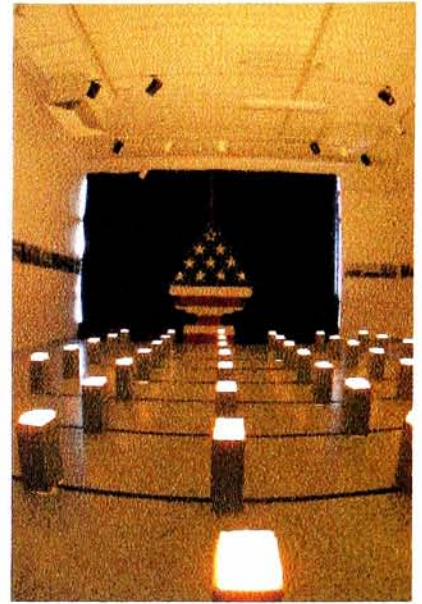


Exhibition at S.P.A.S. Gallery

majority of Americans. Making it on a large scale was in the tradition of the attractions that sprung up all alongside the highways in the 50's and 60's when these highways were busy and not yet considered historic. When businesses thrived on routes like 66, which ran east to west in the southern states, and the roadside architecture imitated what the business sold. It was a time when giant taco shaped buildings and giant ice cream sundaes popped up all over the American highways, which was later borrowed by and influenced Pop Art.

The tree hovered in the center of the exhibit on the wall, dividing the photographic images. The smell of artificial plastic vanilla was present upon entering the gallery. The central object at eye level was the Magic Tree® air freshener, imitating its position in an automobile. The eyes of the viewer then went to the horizon line of images. This brought the viewer in to where they could see the Magic Tree®. Then to inspect the tree, the viewer would have to navigate the small castings on the floor.

The photographs were images abstracted, distorted, and blurred. Thus capturing some essence



Exhibition at S.P.A.S.
Gallery without wall
lights

of beauty and removing it from its ugly typical scene on an American highway. The blurred motion and metal machines acknowledges the ideas that Marinetti and the Futurists held dear in their manifesto for fast cars and notions of lust in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the early 1900's.

We declare that the world's wonder has been enriched by a fresh beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car with its trunk adorned by great exhaust pipes like snakes with an explosive breath ... a roaring car that seems to be driving under shrapnel, is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace.¹²

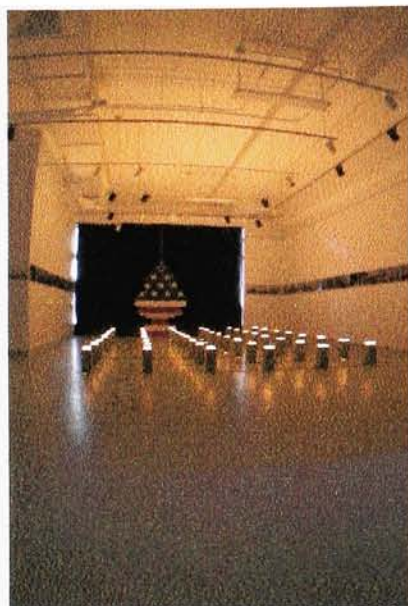
They are similar to film stills, a single frame taken out of a motion picture. The images are out of context, yet present a beautified landscape.

The castings were arranged in their grid on the floor in the center of space creating their analogy for the pavement below. The clear asphalt is a monument to the functional aspects of the highway. It is presented in manner that, like



Exhibition at S.P.A.S.
Gallery without wall
lights

the road, is intrusive to landscape in which is placed. The grid of casting was designed to inhibit the walking space of the gallery by forming path ways between the work. It is a casting of light and land, or a landscape photograph. The reproduction of a hard-featured everyday thing was placed upon a pedestal of distinction, glowing together in grid that mimicked a tiny cityscape. The castings also imitated a graveyard of small tombstones or obelisks that symbolize the destruction of the road.



Exhibition at S.P.A.S.
Gallery without wall
lights

Conclusion:

The three segments of my thesis work represent the plurality of the American road experience. The Romantic notion of leaving everything you know, getting onto a strip of asphalt to escape all problems through an encounter with beauty and exciting adventures, the iconography of the roadside attraction, and the despair of man and machine going horribly awry.

All three segments furnish an aesthetic for the here and now of the American road, a massive industrious production that harbors sentiments of my ideas of the Romantic. The ideas of escape, adventure, new experiences, losing one's self, and reinventing one's self. The work takes an air freshener and materials from the road and employs them as an artistic source. The work redefined the term of landscape photography, in which the photograph mimicked the qualities and properties of the landscape itself. The work challenged preconceptions of travel and the experience of the road by conventional definitions of the medium. The work maintained a balance, while acknowledging the ugliness of the road, it allowed the audience to experience the way I discovered America and it exhibits the beauty I see.

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